

Teachers and Students' Stereotypes about the Teaching and Learning of English¹

Estereotipos de los Profesores y Estudiantes sobre la
Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés

Eliana Edith Roberto Flórez
and Gladis Leonor Arias Rodríguez^{2*}

Universidad Santo Tomás, Colombia

Abstract

This article is the result of a research study that examined teachers and undergraduate students' stereotypes about English teaching and learning processes at a private university in Tunja, Colombia. The research was carried out with six English teachers and twenty undergraduate students from first and second semesters. The instruments used to collect data were semi-structured interviews and questionnaires from both teachers and students. A grounded theory method was used to analyze the gathered information. Findings demonstrate that language teachers created stereotypes about students' academic work, behavior, and attitudes due to their experiences with them as their teachers, and particularly according to students' academic majors. Students also evidence stereotypes about the teaching and learning of English, according to their experiences in English class.

Keywords: English language, language teachers, teaching and learning process, stereotypes, undergraduate students.

Resumen

Este artículo es el resultado de un estudio investigativo el cual tiene como finalidad compartir los resultados después de examinar los estereotipos de los profesores y estudiantes de pregrado sobre los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en una universidad privada en Tunja, Colombia. La

75

¹ Recieved: January 15, 2016 / Accepted: September 23, 2016

² eliana.roberto@usantoto.edu.co / gladis.arias01@usantoto.edu.co

investigación se llevó a cabo con seis profesores de inglés y veinte estudiantes de pregrado pertenecientes a primer y segundo semestre. Los instrumentos usados para la recopilación de datos fueron: entrevistas semi-estructuradas y cuestionarios aplicados a profesores y estudiantes. Los resultados demostraron que los profesores de idiomas crearon estereotipos sobre el trabajo académico de los estudiantes, comportamiento y actitudes debido a sus experiencias al relacionarse con ellos como sus profesores, en especial de acuerdo con el programa académico de los estudiantes. Los estudiantes también evidencian los estereotipos sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés de acuerdo con sus experiencias en el salón de clase de inglés.

Palabras clave: Idioma inglés, profesores de idiomas, procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, estereotipos, estudiantes de pregrado.

Resumo

Este artigo é o resultado de um estudo investigativo o qual tem como finalidade compartilhar os resultados depois de examinar os estereótipos dos professores e estudantes de graduação sobre os processos de ensino e aprendizagem do inglês em uma universidade particular em Tunja, Colômbia. A pesquisa foi realizada com seis professores de inglês e vinte estudantes de graduação pertencentes a primeiro e segundo semestre. Os instrumentos usados para a recopilación de dados foram: entrevistas semiestruturadas e questionários aplicados a professores e estudantes. Os resultados demonstraram que os professores de idiomas criassem estereótipos sobre o trabalho acadêmico dos estudantes, comportamento e atitudes devido a suas experiências ao relacionar-se com eles como seus professores, em especial de acordo com o programa acadêmico dos estudantes. Os estudantes também evidenciam os estereótipos sobre o ensino e a aprendizagem do inglês de acordo com suas experiências na sala de aula de inglês.

Palavras chave: Idioma inglês, professores de idiomas, processos de ensino e aprendizagem, estereótipos, estudantes de graduação.

Introduction

This article shares the results of a research project into teachers and students' stereotypes about the teaching and learning of English at a private university in Tunja – Boyacá, Colombia. Stereotypes present themselves in different contexts, and in this case, English classes are not the exception. There are many factors that affect English teaching and learning processes. Thus, the study allows us to reflect on teachers and students' stereotypes that emerge from different perspectives. In addition, the project provided a space to detect aspects that language teachers take into account when they create stereotypes about their students. It also allowed for the discovery of how undergraduate students perceive their own English learning process.

Two categories emerged from the data analysis: teachers' stereotypes about students' academic performance in English classes, and students' stereotypes of their own English learning process and academic conditions. These allow us to delve more deeply into the subject and explain teachers and students' positions, to identify strengths and weaknesses about the use of English, to contribute with ways to guide the methodologies for English classes, and to encourage students to recognize the importance of learning English as a foreign language.

This study permitted the researchers to carry out informal talks with language teachers and undergraduate students in order to verify how students were the subject of stereotyping from teachers and from themselves. A variety of stereotypes emerged from students' performance and the academic process of learning English, and particularly in regards to their academic programs. According to students and teachers' answers, the results showed that students can be classified with both positive and negative stereotypes towards their English learning process.

Literature Review

The theories that underpin this study are based on stereotyping in general, as well as teachers' and students' stereotypes about the process of teaching and learning English. These issues contribute to understanding the presence and importance of stereotypes in education.

Stereotypes

A stereotype is a thought adopted about a specific group of individuals, or assumptions people make about a variety of different topics and issues. These can also relate to ideologies developed according to people's own experience, customs and beliefs. Further,

stereotypes relate to accepted views and norms of social groups that are developed in people's minds.

Allport, one of the pioneers of analyzing stereotypes (1954), studied the complexity of people's relationships, the perceptions of the social environment, and the way people process information. Further, that stereotypes are examples of the bias people develop according to the characteristics of situations, and the shortcuts they adopt which lead to erroneous perceptions of the world (Allport, 1954). Stereotypes produce misinterpretations in people's daily lives because they do not allow us to see situations or behavior from an objective point of view. McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears (2002, p. 4) state, "Over time, this negative view of stereotypes has become the received wisdom."

Most stereotypes have both positive and negative features, and these may vary in terms of how tenaciously they are held and how likely they are to be developed for a given target. Different parts of the stereotypes are likely to be salient in different contexts. (Schneider, 2005, p. 556)

Hall (as cited by Holliday, Kullman & Hyde, 2010, p. 126), argued the following:

Stereotypes get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about that person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity.

On the other hand, O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery and Fiske (as cited by Holliday, Kullman & Hyde, 2010) defined stereotypes as a "social classification of particular groups and people as often highly simplified and generalized signs, which implicitly or explicitly represent a set of values, judgements and assumptions concerning their behavior, characteristics or history" (p. 126).

Based on the previous definitions, some authors agree that stereotypes are inherently "bad" or "wrong" because they are illogical in origin, resistant to contradiction or morally mistaken. According to Fishman (1956), stereotypes are not taken seriously in different context because these may be essentially incorrect, inaccurate, contrary-to-fact, and therefore, undesirable taking into account people's beliefs in general. However, stereotypes may refer to positive characteristics of a particular person or group of people. Allport (1954) did acknowledge that stereotypes were not always negative, but this fact has often been overlooked. Taylor and Simard (1975) argue that "out-group stereotypes may lead to the positive outcome of mutual social differentiation: each

group is seen as it wishes to be seen and any desired differences are highlighted” (p. 240).

At the same time, stereotypes have been seen as ways to appreciate and simplify the understanding of the world. They also help to understand people’s conduct with respect to certain social problems. In fact, stereotypes have serious consequences in society. However, Schneider (2005) mentions that negative stereotypes are more difficult to change than positive ones.

Stereotypes in Education

In terms of stereotypes in education, Wright (2004) states that students may be classified as good or bad students. The author explains that good students are characterized as hard-working, reliable and responsible. Sometimes, language teachers believe that intelligent students are good students, but according to Wright (2004), innate intelligence is not the only key or the most important aspect for a student to be successful in their academic performance. Being a good student implies a positive attitude towards each academic duty. In contrast, bad students are characterized by being lazy, irresponsible, rarely showing interest in the subject. They complain about everything, and it is difficult for them to follow instructions (Wright, 2004).

Bearing in mind students’ behavior, teachers tend to classify them according to these positive or negative attitudes towards the teaching and learning of English. Students show these attitudes based on their own strengths and weaknesses in the subject. According to Gardner (1985), attitudes present cognitive and affective aspects in terms of behaviors and emotional states. Students’ behavior shows their values and motivation towards academic activities. Gardner (1985) links the individuals’ rationale for any activity, such as language learning, with the range of behaviors and the degree of effort employed in achieving goals. Victor and Lockhart (1995) explain how students create their own stereotypes based on previous academic practices in regards to learning English. Even if teachers or students avoid stereotypes, they are present in many cases in the academic contexts.

According to Horwitz (1988), conflicting attitudes have a powerful impact on how objectives, methodologies and assessment procedures are perceived, accepted or refused. Besides, these attitudes allow learners the opportunity to unravel this complex network of stereotypes, to reflect on how these factors affect their day-to-day decisions and behaviors, and possibly to start a process of negotiation. In Horwitz’s study, students and teachers improved their communication, and as a

result, the quality of education increased. It was recognized as a way to include students and teachers in the effort of joint learning.

Another aspect that influences the way students and language teachers create their own stereotypes is students' purposes. For instance, when students recognize the importance of learning English within their professional life, it has several advantages such as getting a job easily, understanding academic information on websites or recognizing that nowadays the human being is living in a globalized world. These aspects are supported by McKay (2002), who argues that learning English has international recognition, increases cultural knowledge.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the classroom atmosphere influences the teaching and learning process of English. Supporting this, O'Reilly (1975) and Kelly (1980) establish that the teacher is a part of the learning environment as perceived by the learners. As such, his or her teaching behavior affects the learners' perception of the classroom climate. Thus, stereotypes that emerge in English classes are powerful when these build a positive or negative relationship between teachers and students.

Methodology

Research Design

This research was developed based on a descriptive case study as it focused on the analysis of small groups of participants. Researchers collected data through teachers' interviews, and student and teacher questionnaires. This allowed for the identification of language teachers and students' stereotypes about teaching and learning English as a foreign language. It also provided a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information and reporting the results.

Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description. Furthermore, the descriptive case study is a relatively formal analysis done in order to analyze classroom life. Hakin (1987) states, "The case study is the social research equivalent of the spotlight or the microscope in which emphasizes is placed on the value of understanding a phenomenon as it exists within a natural context" (p. 61).

Context and Participants

The participants involved in this study were six English teachers from a private university in Tunja, Colombia. The teachers were selected bearing in mind that one of them has been working in this institution for

12 years, two more teachers had labor experiences in another country such as England and Ireland, three language teacher were selected because they have had the opportunity to work with all the faculties and the last teacher was chosen because he had been working at the university just one semester. In addition, undergraduate students were selected from first and second semesters at the same private university. The process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language is based on the development of communicative skills, and is part of the required subjects of the curriculum.

Data Collection Instruments

According to the characteristics of this study, the following instruments were implemented:

The semi-structured interview. This was used with six language teachers who were part of the Language Department staff. This technique was used to collect data because its flexibility allows us to know in detail specific and relevant aspects of the research such as the stereotypes teachers created about their students. Corbetta (2010) recommends the semi-structured interview because it provides an appropriate environment for a fluid dialogue between interviewer and interviewee.

Teacher questionnaire. This was implemented to collect data as a way to obtain specific information related to teachers' opinions about students who attended to English classes and the different stereotypes that emerged according to each academic program. McClure (2002) recommends to apply this instrument with open or closed questions as a mean to measure facts, attitudes or values.

Student questionnaire. It was used in this research as a way to obtain information based on students' stereotypes about their own process of learning English and the way they perceived this process at school and at university. Bearing in mind the previous information, the main objective proposed in this research study was to identify teachers and students' stereotypes about English teaching and learning processes as a foreign language at a private university.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study was done following the grounded theory approach since it permitted to describe the process to be carried out in order to analyze data which was gathered through the use of several instruments. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that this approach consists of a set of

steps to formulate hypotheses based on conceptual ideas that guarantee a good theory by creating categories based on the data gathered.

In order to validate the findings of this study, methodological triangulation was used. According to Rothbauer (2008), triangulation is seen as a research strategy that can reduce deficiencies caused by using only one method of inquiry. Besides, it involves the use of different ways to gather data. Data analysis permitted to face the different points of view between students and teachers in order to make conclusions that contribute to improve the field of teaching and learning English.

Results

Two main categories arose from the current research in order to achieve the main objective of this study. Besides, the grounded theory approach was implemented to analyze the data gathered and a methodological triangulation was used to validate the findings of this project.

Teachers' Stereotypes about Students' Academic Performance in English Classes

This category emphasized how each academic program was stereotyped according to the undergraduate students' academic performance in activities that were achieved in English classes.

The private university where the research took place offers a variety of academic programs such as Electronic, System and Mechanical Engineering, Law, Business and Accounting. Once language teachers had the opportunity to work with undergraduate students in different faculties, similarities and differences were found when teachers created stereotypes about students. According to this, Bandura's theory (1986) explains the way that our internal mental process works, it means that stereotypes influence the way people interpret and perceive the world. As a result of this, individuals can and often do perceive the exact same event or situation very differently. Thus, the participants agreed that most of the students from this university have obstacles in order to develop activities assigned in English classes, they lacked the context to really practice and immerse themselves in the language, and for these reasons, a lot of students found difficulties in their English learning process. As it was mentioned in the semi – structured interview

A lot of different levels in each of the classes that I teach most of the students find difficult to learn English and this can affect their attitudes to learn in English. Some people don't prepare minimum effort in to learn English...

In the previous sample, it was evidenced how language teachers had had the experience to teach English in different faculties with different levels. The way they perceived the process of learning and teaching English as a foreign language was with stereotypes, for instance, they noted that most of the students do not make enough effort to learn the language, they had problems in terms of confidence and most of them did not have a clear idea of team work.

Besides, language teachers were aware that the students had different learning styles, which were reflected in their performances along the academic activities such as individual work, small group work, individual tutoring with teachers, among others. These aspects contributed to create students' stereotypes. According to Allport (1954), stereotypes are studied as the complexity of people's relationships, the perceptions of the social environment and the way people process information.

First of all we have to take into account that students are different in terms of learning, every single human being has his/her own learning style and students come from different backgrounds.

In spite of finding the process of learning English difficult for the students, language teachers also created stereotypes according to the faculty students belong to, understanding stereotypes like assumptions people have about different topics or people's ideologies. These stereotypes can emerge in different contexts as well as in education. Ambady, Shih, Kim, and Pittinsky (2001) stated that stereotypes have different effects in people; hence, negative stereotypes produce negative reactions in people's behavior, and on the contrary, the positive ones can facilitate people's cognitive performance. The researchers realized that most of the language teachers created stereotypes of their students bearing in mind the academic programs offered by the university.

I consider that students change in terms of their attitude, behavior and personality according to their programs, for example civil engineering students are active and responsible, they participate actively rather than architecture students.

After analyzing the data gathered, these are the most common stereotypes language teachers had about students according to their major. Some are positive and others are negative. Likewise, Schneider (2005) mentions, "Most stereotypes have both positive and negative features, and these may vary in terms of how tenaciously they are held and how likely they are to be developed for a given target." (p. 329)

For instances most of the languages teachers mentioned in the gathered data through the research instruments applied the following excerpts:

Law students like speaking in public, even if they like to complain about many things. They are more dedicated to learn English because they take 10 levels during their major; besides, they are punctual and good readers.

International Business are very weak for learning English, their attitude is negative because they are not aware about the importance of learning a foreign languages, which is essential for their major. In addition, Electronic, System and Mechanical Engineering students are kind of analytical and practical; they are very creative and organized, they like doing different kinds of activities because they get bored easily. Architecture students are creative, but the problem is that they are somehow lazy in English classes. Accounting and Business Administration students, in general, are kind of good at planning and organizing things.

Law students are much more generous to speak...Architecture and Civil Engineering students are more concerned about projects and other areas, thus, English is seen as an obstacle they have to get over because it is a mandatory subject, electronic students are organize and they hate wasting time

The previous samples demonstrated that stereotypes were created bearing in mind many factors such as age, values, attitude, and academic goals, among others. These stereotypes are linked or affect education contexts in positive or negative ways. According to Holliday, Kullman and Hyde (2010), stated

The experience of confronting students who overtly refuse, or are more or less unwilling to accept, classroom procedures belongs to every teacher – and the more pervasive and subtle is this refusal, the more difficult is for teachers to build a positive relationship with their students. (p. 126)

Moreover, stereotypes affect people's thoughts, emotions, and behavior. However, Schneider (2005) mentions that negative stereotypes are more difficult to change than the positive ones.

Another relevant aspect that language teachers took into account when they formed stereotypes about students was based on their own professional experience. According to Wright (2000), students may be classified as good or bad students.

In general, I consider that students in this university are dynamic, they have good behavior and attitude, but few students - not so many - have personal problems, like in the family or maybe they don't have the best academic development. However, Law students like to discuss a lot,

students of Civil Engineering, they have good performance, architecture students like doing things.

The previous sample expressed that there are different kinds of students, students who take seriously their academic performance, students who only care about getting good grades, students who are not excellent students, but have a positive attitude to the process of learning another language, among others. According to Wright (2000), innate intelligence is not the only key or the most important aspect for a student to be successful in their academic performance. Being a good student implies a positive attitude in front of each academic duty. In daily academic practices, students show different social problems (families, friends) that affect their emotions, beliefs and ways to face the academic challenges, but in despite of their problems, they demonstrate positive attitude in their academic process and it is a very important aspect to keep in mind in order to achieve their professional goals.

On the other side, language teachers mentioned that according to the students' profile based on their major, it is necessary to adapt useful methodologies in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. It is understandable that every single human being is different because s/he is unique, but also it is relevant to perceive that some groups have certain similarities maybe because they belong to an academic program with specific skills. For instance, Law students have the ability to read and understand extensive texts, Architecture students are good at drawing, and Engineering students need to understand Mathematics and Calculus well, among others. It means that multiple intelligences play an important role in this context because it does not mean that everybody has to be good at math, at drawing, at speaking another language. Languages teachers generated students' stereotypes bearing in mind their professional profile. According to the previous statements, teachers feel the necessity to bring appropriate activities to the students in their English classes, trying to find the way students like learning English in simple workshops that call students' attention. Hence, some of the interviewees revealed:

Law students like sharing about politics and history which is a big part of their profession. In this way they prefer reading about topics of their own field of study. Architecture and Engineering students are very active people; they like to do drawing and creative activities.

85

The last sample showed how language teachers at the university have to accommodate to what methodology suits their students' necessities. Bearing in mind that students have weaknesses and

strengths in their process of learning English, some of them have the necessity to improve reading skills, others in pronunciation, writing or speaking. One aspect to highlight in this study is that some teachers help students to recognize the importance of learning English. In conclusion, this category shows that stereotypes from language teachers is indeed a very important issue at the university

Students' Stereotypes in their English learning process and Academic Conditions

This category shows the students' stereotypes emerged in English classes. Learning English is not an easy task in our context because there are many prejudices in terms of learning and teaching; some years ago, English was not important or necessary for our lives as professionals, so we did not have the need to learn this language, but with the demand established by the Free Trade Agreements and the expansion of the communications the role of English in our country has changed.

Thus, English is seen as an important subject in people's academic and professional life. The government is interested in improving the skills in this subject; hence, it implemented the bilingualism project which unfortunately has shown low results, Sánchez (2013) argues that in Colombia, despite the bilingualism project, students' English level is still low; for this reason, it is necessary that, from the classroom, English teachers propose ways that contribute to motivate and improve the proficiency in this language, and investigation is one of the ways to guarantee changes in this field of education.

Students from this private university in Colombia expressed their stereotypes about learning English in different ways. First, about English methodologies, there have been many complaints from students which became stereotypes about learning English because adult people have had bad experiences with their English learning process as product of the educational system; however, the culture for learning this language is changing, as it can be seen in studies done about this field:

The English culture in Colombia is growing, with English-language media reaching an increasing number of students and, in some cases, aiding their learning. However, the challenges faced by English teachers - a lack of resources, motivation, access, time, language skills and contextual training - continue to present barriers to positive and equitable English acquisition in formal education. (British Council, 2015, p. 58)

Besides, undergraduate students stated:

My experience of English was bad at school because we only learnt separate words and we could not communicate using English.

In fact, students' English learning depends largely on schools, some private schools have implemented bilingual curricula as a way to improve their quality, this is also a mechanism to compete with other schools and get more students because some parents are conscious that their children need to know English as a way to take advantage of their professional life. Thus, a student argues about it:

It was good because my English teacher demanded me a lot and it helped me to learn, the problem was that we did not have enough hours a week.

In addition, in the Colombian environment, it is growing the stereotype that learning English is positive for the development of people and the country because there are more possibilities to travel, work, study, export and import products; it is also perceived by a teacher and by students:

The stereotype that people who speak good English have more job prospects and better salaries motivates students to learn, use and improve their English.

In general, the researchers found that students also created stereotypes about English classes in a positive and negative way bearing in mind their academic experiences they faced in school and nowadays in the university context. Students realize that learning English is essential for their professional majors. According to students' stereotypes of their English learning process at the university, it can be seen that some of them have a positive attitude, as follows:

My attitude is very good because it is important to learn another language. The methodology of the teacher is adequate and facilitates my learning process.

Moreover, it is still viewed how some students show a total lack of interest in learning English; therefore, it is very difficult to have positive results in teaching this language:

My English learning is not the best because I have not been so interested in it, I am only worried about the subjects of my field of study.

Additionally, when students enter university, they perceive the importance of learning English because in the different subjects they have to work with bibliography in English and they must investigate on the Internet; thus, it makes them feel the need to improve their

English skills; however, teachers observe that students have different stereotypes about their English learning process, depending of their environment; thus one of the teachers said:

There is a small minority of students who recognize the importance of English in their lives; therefore, approach the subject with interest. The majority of them seem blissfully unaware of the potential benefits of learning the world's most widely spoken language and the relative disadvantages of not doing so, even in their own region.

Students' academic development is affected by different factors such as stereotypes, behaviors, contexts, and also personal perspectives; however, students' academic performance is also product of the motivation they find in the context.

Unfortunately, in our atmosphere, teachers perceive that the conditions do not contribute enough, and it is an aspect they have to assume and look for ways to motivate the acquisition of this language, taking into account that English has become indispensable in all fields of knowledge. One of the teachers argued:

I feel that students have common difficulty in working with English because there are lacks in the context to really practice and immerse themselves in the language."

As it was mentioned before, English teachers have to face many difficulties for teaching because the conditions are not the best; thus, this is one of the reasons why the Bilingualism has not attained the expected results in Colombia after 12 years of implementation. According to studies done by Colombia Aprende (2014), only 8% of students leave school with a B2 level; English is taking position in people's minds due to the exigencies of current times. One of the ways to improve English use is through research because it permits to identify problems, create solutions, propose new methodologies and strategies, create new materials, and also motivate teachers to progress in their academic practices.

This study aimed at identifying the teachers and students' stereotypes presented in English classes at a private university in Colombia. Some stereotypes found were positive and others negative. This research tried to help language teacher reflect about negative thoughts they have from students who belong to different academic programs in positive

characteristics. Besides, it is necessary to avoid sharing negative stereotypes with new language teachers because they might perceive a bad impression about their students before meeting them.

The main findings can summarize that stereotypes are always going to exist in the academic context. Even if people do not believe in them, they exist as the culture and tradition of people. Acceptance depends on the environment; thus, people can reject or accept them. Teaching English is engaged in stereotypes as products of teachers and students' thoughts and background; however, students are different. They react according to their own experience and sometimes they are affected by the major they are studying as a normal process of learning.

Bearing in mind the different studies carried out based on stereotypes, the finding of this current study concluded that in the process of learning English, there have been some stereotypes due to the manners we have lived as a developing country. They have origin in the internationalization of knowledge through the Internet, the Free Trade Agreements, and also the positions of our governments in front of world power countries. Some years ago, English was seen as a secondary subject; thus, it was not important. Nowadays, the evidences of this investigation show English is necessary for people's progress and also for the development of the country. People feel the necessity to be involved in technology, science, education, business, among others, thus, English become in a useful tool to understand the field mentioned previously.

As it was mentioned in the literature review, in other studies as well as in this study, students are engaged in academic programs; in terms of learning English, some of them are not very involved. Moreover, about students' personality, they are very respectful. In some cases, language teachers create stereotypes about them taking into account their attitude in the English classes; however, this is an attitude teachers have to avoid because students have the same rights and learning opportunities. When language teachers created negative stereotypes about certain students, it affects many aspects such as the atmosphere in the classroom, students and teachers' attitude in front of English classes or the friendship between learners and teachers.

One of the goals of English teachers is to guide students' performance in this language. Thus, this investigation highlights students and teachers' stereotypes and problems about the English processes of teaching and learning. The limitations presented in this research was the lack of time of the languages teachers who were the participants of this study. It was so difficult try to set up the time for

applying the instruments. Besides, this study is useful for other areas, not only in English classes because stereotypes might be presented in different fields of study. Also, teachers who belong to the variety of academic programs offer in the private university where the research took place have the duty to encourage students to learn English according to their majors.

References

- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, M.A: Addison – Wesley.
- Ambady, N., Shih, M., Kim, A., & Pittinsky, T. (2001). Stereotype susceptibility in children: Effects of identity activation on quantitative performance. *PsycholSci*, 12 (5), 385- 388.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- British Council. (2015). English in Colombia: *An examination of policy, perceptions and influencing factors*. Retrieved from: https://ei.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/latin-america_research/English%20in%20Colombia.pdf
- Brown, G. (2001). *Teaching the spoken language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbetta, P. (2003): *Social research theory, methods and techniques*. London: Sage.
- Fishman, J.A. (1956). An examination of the process and function of social stereotypes, *Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(1), 27-46.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hakin, C. (1987). *Research design: Strategies and choices in the design of social research*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Hamilton, D. L. (1979). A cognitive - attributional analysis of stereotyping, in L. Berkowitz, (Ed.). *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 12. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Holliday, Kullman and Hyde (2010). *Intercultural communication*. London: Routledge.
- Horwitz, E.K. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning foreign language students. *Modern Language Journal*, 72(3), 283 – 294.
- McGarty, C. Yzerbyt, V. & Spears, R. (2002). Stereotypes as explanations. *The formation of meaningful beliefs about social groups*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McClure, R. (2002). *Common data collections strategies effective in qualitative studies using action research in technical/operational training programs*. Retrieved from <http://evokedevelopment.com/uploads/blog/commonData.pdf>
- McKay, S. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- O'Reilly, R. (1975). Classroom climate and achievement in secondary school mathematics classes. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 21(4), 241-248.
- Rothbauer, P. (2008) Triangulation. In L. M. Given (Ed.). *The SAGE encyclopedia of quality research methods*, (pp. 892 –894). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sánchez, A. (2013). *Investigación e información de bilingüismo en Colombia*. Bogotá, D. C.: Banco de la República. Retrieved from: http://www.banrep.gov.co/sites/default/files/publicaciones/archivos/re_172_0.pdf
- Schneider, D. (2005). *The psychology of stereotyping*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory studies using action research in technical/operational training programs*. Retrieved from <http://evokedevelopment.com/uploads/blog/commonData.pdf>
- Taylor, D., & Simard, L. (1975). Social interaction in the bilingual setting. *Canadian Psychological Review/Psychologie canadienne*, 16(4), 240-254.
- Victori, M. & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing metacognition in self-directed language learning. *System*, 23(2), 223-234.
- Wright, S. A. (2004). Perception and stereotypes of ESL students. *Internet TESL Journal*, 10(2). Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Wright-Stereotyping.html>

Authors

***Eliana Edith Roberto Flórez** holds an MA in Language Teaching from the *Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia*. She is a full-time teacher and researcher at Universidad Santo Tomás (USTA) in Tunja. Her research interests are in academic writing and literature. She belongs to the “*Expedicionarios Humanistas*” research group at USTA.

***Gladis Leonor Arias Rodríguez** holds an MA in Language Teaching from the *Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia* and an MA in Pedagogy from the Universidad Santo Tomas. She has investigated in English reading, literature and curriculum. She is a full time teacher, researcher and E-magazine editor at *USTA Tunja*.